

# Maine Coastline

News from the Maine Coastal Program

Winter 2005



## The Gulf of Maine Summit

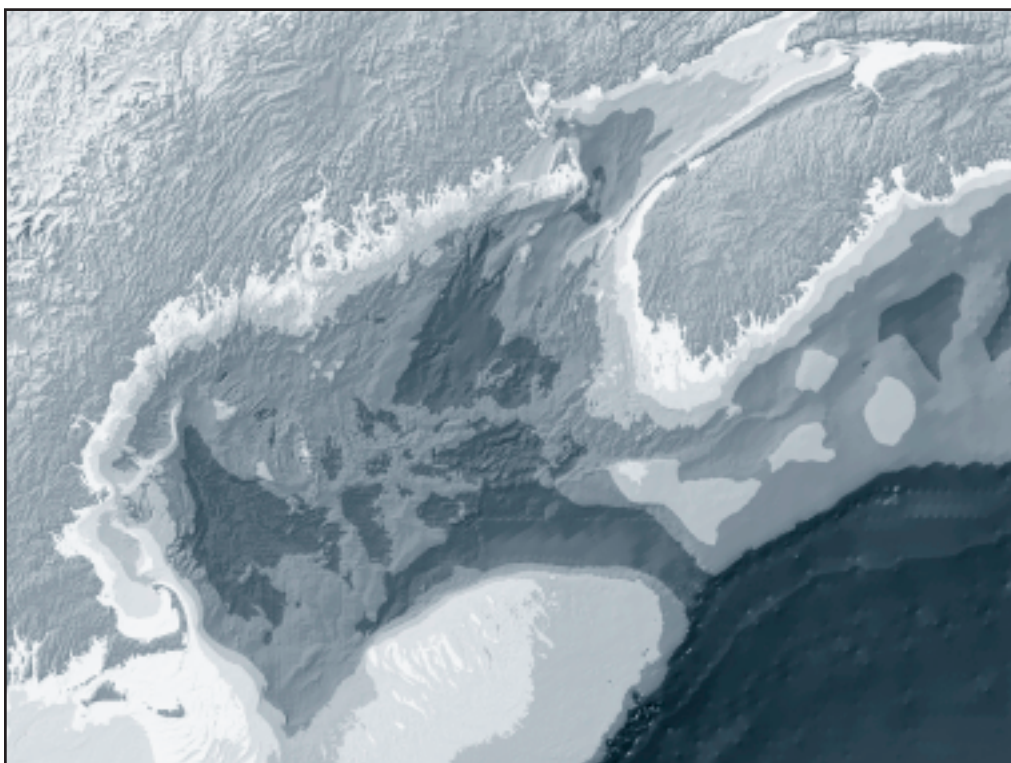
### Assessing Regional Progress... and Planning for More

The Gulf of Maine, a semi-enclosed sea bordered to the east by Cape Sable and the west by Cape Cod, helps to define Maine's natural landscape, economy and cultural heritage. The health of the Gulf is in turn affected by activities in its watershed—an area that encompasses 69,115 square miles in Maine, Massachusetts, New Brunswick, New Hampshire and Nova Scotia.

More than 250 people gathered this October at the Gulf of Maine Summit in St. Andrews, New Brunswick to discuss the sea's current status. Public forums, held in the two years preceding the Summit, had helped to identify the foremost concerns of residents throughout the watershed. Coastal land use and development, contaminated runoff, and fisheries all ranked high, and Summit participants sought ways to better define and track these ongoing issues.

"The Gulf of Maine watershed encompasses an array of dynamic ecosystems that are continually responding to natural changes and human impacts," explains Maine Coastal Program Director Kathleen Leyden. "To get a 'big picture' view of the Gulf and successfully document changing conditions, it's critical to find measurable indicators that can be tracked over time. Indicators can reveal whether the overall health of the Gulf's ecosystems are improving or declining, signaling the need for new policy decisions or management practices."

Over the past decade, scientists have begun to track a number of environmental indicators in the Gulf, such as toxic contaminants in shellfish and nitrogen concentrations in coastal waters. Other indicators are provided by the more than 300 environmental monitoring projects underway around the Gulf. "The Gulf of Maine is very well studied, but only partially understood," notes Peter Wells, co-editor of the *Tides of Change* report prepared for the Gulf Summit. A recent proclamation, signed by the governors and premiers of the five Gulf states and provinces, acknowledged the need to integrate monitoring efforts and convey scientific findings more rapidly to the



This map created by the U.S. Geological Survey portrays the underwater topography of the Gulf of Maine.

region's policy-makers. By identifying existing data gaps and research needs, the Summit discussions will advance the process of standardizing data so that it can be shared among organizations and jurisdictions.

Plans are underway to produce a State of the Gulf of Maine report by 2006 that will summarize current conditions in the Gulf watershed. The planned State of the Gulf report may establish several categories of indicators, such as ecosystem health, marketable resources (*e.g.*, fisheries and aquaculture), and demographic/socio-economic changes.

As they work to develop and refine indicators, scientists and policy-makers hope to strengthen their partnerships, inviting broader participation in developing goals and objectives for ecosystem health and in selecting appropriate indicators. They also plan to draw on the experiences of other regions, like the Great Lakes, that have successfully created regional indicators of ecosystem health.



## Director's Column

December 2004

Two recent reports on the status of our nation's coastal and marine resources suggest the need for bold new management strategies. The reports, prepared by the Pew Ocean Commission and the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, have prompted valuable discussions at all levels of resource management—from the halls of Congress and state offices to grassroots organizations.

Both reports conclude that existing management approaches are too fragmented and fail to adequately protect coastal and ocean resources. Simply stated, in the U.S. Commission report, "...water, people, fish, marine mammals and ships flow continually across invisible institutional borders," yet current boundaries and modes of management don't reflect those complex, dynamic interactions. Both reports call for new approaches that view individual resources and industries within the context of larger ecosystems.

In Maine, the path to ecosystem-based management is being blazed by the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment, a model of cross-jurisdictional cooperation highlighted in this edition of *Maine Coastline*. The recent Gulf of Maine Summit in St. Andrews gave participants from throughout the region a chance to celebrate past successes and renew their commitment to improving the health of Gulf ecosystems.

This region's 15-year track record of cooperative Gulf management is exceptional on a national scale: only one other region in the U.S., the Great Lakes, has a similar international agreement and equally strong participation by both state/provincial and federal representatives. The Gulf region also benefits from having a dedicated and growing community of nonprofit groups that are gathering valuable data at the watershed level. Discussions at the Gulf Summit focused on the need to better coordinate these findings so as to establish a series of environmental indicators by which we can measure future progress.

Whatever new forms of ecosystem-based management evolve in this region, the Council clearly will be a key player. On behalf of the Council's many partners in Maine, I offer congratulations on a successful Summit and best wishes on the Council's 15th anniversary!

Kathleen Leyden  
Maine Coastal Program Director

## Maine Coastline

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**Martha Freeman**

Director

Maine State Planning Office

**Kathleen Leyden**

Director, Maine Coastal Program

**Theresa Torrent-Ellis**

Communication, Education and Outreach

*Maine Coastline* Editor

**Maine Coastal Program**

State Planning Office

38 State House Station

Augusta, ME 04333

207-287-3261

1-800-662-4545

207-287-8059 (FAX)

[info@mainecoastalprogram.org](mailto:info@mainecoastalprogram.org)

[www.mainecoastalprogram.org](http://www.mainecoastalprogram.org)

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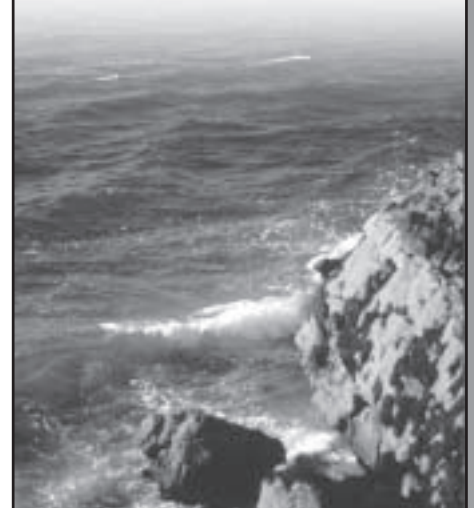
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# Shaping a Regional Vision for Sustainable Tourism

**A**s Maine's largest natural resource-based industry, tourism generates more revenues than forestry, farming, fishing and aquaculture combined. "Tourism has tremendous potential to maintain and enhance our quality of life in this region," says Theresa Torrent-Ellis of the Maine Coastal Program, who co-chairs the Gulf of Maine Council's Geotourism Task Force. "To realize that potential, tourism needs to foster environmental stewardship, support the region's distinctive culture, and improve the well-being of residents."

Tourism providers and specialists gathered this October to discuss how to foster sustainable tourism in the Gulf of Maine watershed. They considered prospects for a region-wide certification or accreditation program that would encourage tourism businesses to adopt sustainable practices. More than 60 such programs exist around the world, helping visitors to identify operations that provide exceptional experiences while enhancing the local quality of life.

In many settings, government helps to subsidize costs of certification—an investment that economist David Vail of Bowdoin College considers well-warranted: "If government supports tourism," he says, "it should support the very best in tourism. The emphasis in certification is on total quality of the tour experience, adhering to practices that are way above the industry standard."

Workshop participants, while interested in certification, acknowledged the challenges to creating such a program on a region-wide scale. Each state and province already has its own distinctive "branding" (*i.e.*, marketing identity), and the Gulf of Maine—while a shared regional resource—is not in itself a tourist destination. "There isn't a Gulf of Maine region when it comes to tourism," observes Vail, noting the marked differences in culture and natural landscape between the more populous southern shoreline and the more remote stretches of Maine, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

Jonathan Tourtellot, Director of Sustainable Tourism at the National Geographic Society, helped place the Gulf of Maine in a global context, looking at its features alongside those of more than 100 other destinations around the globe. Tourtellot described a poll (published last March in *National Geographic Traveler*; <http://www.ngtraveler.com/traveler/scorecard/>) that rated destinations based on environmental quality, cultural/social integrity, built heritage, aesthetic appeal, tourism management, and future outlook. The coast of Maine received a score of 71, placing it squarely within the top third of the destinations surveyed (the highest score being an 82 out of 100 possible points). "On the world stage," Tourtellot suggested, "you've got something special here. The challenge is to ensure that tourism is practiced in ways that sustain and enhance the distinctive geographical character of place and the well-being of its residents."



This holistic view of tourism, which Tourtellot terms "geotourism," represents an extension of efforts already underway in Maine to foster responsible forms of nature-based tourism. Two years ago, the Maine Tourism Commission asked its Natural Resources Committee to encourage tourism compatible with Maine's natural environment and related industries. The Committee is now working with the University of Maine to encourage more course offerings and research related to nature-based tourism. The State has also hired a consulting firm to help assess prospects for creating three regional pilot projects (one of them along the Downeast coast) involving nature-based tourism and economic development.

*Sustainable tourism seeks to support the region's distinctive culture and natural assets while providing visitors with a high-quality experience.*



Old Quarry Ocean Adventures  
Stonington  
www.oldquarry.com

Prior to receiving a sustainable tourism award at the 2003 Governor’s Conference on Tourism, Captain Bill Baker claims he didn’t know that’s what he was doing. Old Quarry Ocean Adventures, the campground and kayaking center he runs in Stonington, simply evolved out of his values. Growing up in the 60s and 70s, Baker says, “made me conscious of the environment and of wanting to have as small an impact as possible.”

Eight years ago, Baker bought a 9-acre site overlooking the granite-rimmed islands of Merchants Row. “It’d be nice to say I had a vision for what I wanted to do here,” he says wryly, “but I didn’t.” Baker did know that he wanted to keep the wooded land as close as possible to the way he found it, cutting few trees. He began renting kayaks and then put in some carefully sited tent platforms accessible only by footpaths. He consciously chose to exclude RVs, despite the greater economic return those bring. Each step of the way as he’s grown the business, Baker notes, “the people around me have kept reminding me to keep it small and simple.”



Old Quarry

His business now includes a diverse array of activities that educate visitors and enrich the local economy with minimal ecological impact: guided kayak trips, sailing charters and sailing lessons, guided natural and cultural history tours, and a shuttle boat to Isle au Haut where visitors can hike and bike. Baker routinely educates his guests about Leave No Trace (www.lnt.org) practices, which he says “help people realize that low impact is good—not just in the woods—but at home as well.”

By offering kayakers a camping base, his business helps reduce impacts on nearby public islands. Baker also accepts waste from kayakers who launch from his site. “The added septic load has been problematic,” he admits, “but we’re not going to stop doing this: it’s just a matter of how to address it.” That appears to be the essence of Baker’s business philosophy: do the right thing and find a way to make it work.

This constructive attitude has made Old Quarry a popular business, not just among outdoors enthusiasts but in the local community. Baker says he’s had “amazing community support” through some difficult permitting challenges. People have come to see that there’s little to object to: in Baker’s words, “we’re not in anyone’s face, we hire local people when we can, and spend most of our money on the island. And our campers often eat out twice a day!”

Tourism can be a double-edged sword, Baker acknowledges, but with the decline of the fishing industry he sees it as “the only really sustainable industry left on the Maine coast.” He would like to see the tourist industry focus more attention on sustainability and on increasing visitation during spring and fall. He also hopes to see renewed State support for the Land for Maine’s Future Program. “That program is so important for tourism,” Baker says. “It’s critical having enough places for people to go in the future, and enough launch sites to access the water.”



Sustainable Tourism  
Examples from the Field



Sewa Boyd

Captain Bill Baker, of Old Quarry Ocean Adventures, gives visitors a first-hand look at lobstering.

Oceanside Meadows Inn  
Prospect Harbor  
www.oceaninn.com

Ben and Sonja Walter-Sundaram are innkeepers with a mission: they want to enhance the natural environment and local community on the Schoodic Peninsula where they run Oceanside Meadows Inn. Describing ways in which they conserve energy, recycle, and garden organically, Sonja says their goal is to “show you can have a high-quality experience, being pampered in an historic inn, yet still have a low impact.” “It’s all about living lightly,” Ben adds: “many of the measures we take to minimize waste help us with the bottom line, and our guests take back ideas on what they can do at home.”

The Walter-Sundarams have bought several neighboring parcels to create a 200-acre nature preserve where guests and local residents can enjoy walking and nature study (using interpretive brochures that the couple created). The Walter-Sundarams also host a series of performing arts events, and free science and history lectures in a 130-seat hall within a renovated timber-frame barn. Everyone within a 15-mile radius is invited to programs at the “Innstitute for Arts and Sciences,” many of which showcase local musical and artistic talent.



Oceanside Meadows Inn

Some area residents were wary of the Inn initially, Sonja says, but it became clear this fall that “the community recognizes we’re here for them.” On the eve of the Labor Day weekend, local residents learned of plans to site an LNG facility in the bay just off the Inn. “What was amazing,” she recalls, “is that people were calling us, and looking to us for help. We offered the Inn as a neutral meeting place where people could discuss the issues, share their views, and work side-by-side.” Community members soon concluded they did not want the facility, and the company proposing the facility promptly withdrew its plans.



The “Innstitute for Arts and Sciences”

Since the Inn began operating in 1987, the Walter-Sundarams have consistently supported the local community. “We’ve always hired locally,” Sonja says. “We’ve purchased locally. And one of our biggest goals is to keep guests on the peninsula, spending their money locally. We give them guides and maps we’ve made pointing out all the local attractions, so they don’t just drive down to Bar Harbor.”

The Walter-Sundaram’s sustained commitment to responsible tourism and conservation won them the Gulf of Maine Council’s 2002 Visionary Award. It also brings them more business: increasingly, Ben says, “people choose to come here because of the programs we offer and the mission we have.”

To foster more sustainable tourism, he’d like to see better means of sharing knowledge—such as active media that showcase “healthy based businesses,” and a mentoring program that connects newcomers to sustainability with more experienced practitioners. When it comes to living lightly, Ben says, “we’re all on a learning curve.”



## Celebrating 15 Years of Collaborative Regional Management



The Gulf of Maine Summit afforded a chance to celebrate what has been accomplished throughout the watershed since the first Gulf-wide conference was held 15 years ago. The Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment, which formed following that 1989 conference, has been a driving force supporting collaborative regional management among policy-makers, resource managers, scientists, educators, businesses, communities and citizens. It has facilitated committee work on a broad range of topics—from aquaculture and data management to mapping and public

education. The Council has hosted more than 60 conferences, workshops and symposia, and has awarded grants for local habitat restoration valued at \$4.6 million.

The Summit also highlighted the achievements of local and regional groups, many of them staffed by volunteers, who are working tirelessly to sustain and improve the Gulf's ecosystems. These grassroots efforts involve

- ♦scientific research;
- ♦water-quality monitoring;
- ♦land conservation and stewardship;
- ♦habitat monitoring and restoration;

- ♦mapping;
- ♦pollution reduction;
- ♦energy conservation;
- ♦coastal and marine advocacy;
- ♦beach and trail maintenance;
- ♦protection and recovery of living resources;
- ♦coastal cleanups;
- ♦place-based learning; and
- ♦public education and outreach.

Summit organizers began an inventory of all the local monitoring and stewardship projects underway, and hope to complete this inventory in the coming year—using it as a basis for increased networking and resource-sharing among groups.



*This graphic demonstrates how existing regional management areas for three federal agencies do not coincide, making it difficult for the agencies to coordinate on issues of common concern and work effectively with other regional entities.*

## Federal Ocean Commission Report Supports Regional Management

The newly released final report of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy lends strong support to regional management efforts underway around the Gulf of Maine. One of the report's "guiding principles" is that "geographic management areas [should be] based on ecosystem, rather than political, boundaries." The Commission advocates for a voluntary and flexible process by which groups can form "regional ocean councils" as a way to "coordinate... activities, reduce duplication of efforts, minimize conflicts, and maximize limited resources." Each council would be involved in creating a "regional ocean information program" to carry out research, data collection (working in coordination with existing ocean observing systems), and outreach.

The Commission also recommends that federal agencies move toward adopting common regional boundaries and that the Environmental Protection Agency and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration conduct periodic regional ecosystem assessments.

Responding to the Commission's draft report, Governor Baldacci wrote that Maine is "uniquely poised" to join in one of the first pilot models of the regional ocean council. Not only does this region have the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment and a 15-year-old international agreement, it has strong relations among the state and federal programs that involve coastal management and numerous related regional programs such as the Regional Association for Research in the Gulf of Maine (RARGOM), Gulf of Maine Ocean Observing System (GoMOOS), and Gulf of Maine Data Partnership.

The Gulf of Maine Council is discussing ways that it can best support this new vision for a regional ocean council, and recently held a forum on regional marine governance. Those interested in learning more about this ongoing dialogue can contact David Keeley, the Council's new policy development specialist, at 207-549-3598 or [david@thekeeleygroup.com](mailto:david@thekeeleygroup.com).

# Taking the Long View

## An Interview with David Keeley

After 25 years of government service, David Keeley left the State Planning Office (SPO) in November and opened a consulting firm specializing in ocean and coastal policy. David directed the Maine Coastal Program between 1986 and 1993, and played an instrumental role in launching and guiding the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment. He oversaw SPO's natural resource and land use programs for 15 years, and served twice as SPO's Acting Director. Prior to his departure, *Maine Coastline* spoke with David about the evolving challenge of coastal management.



training or support and often experience high turnover rates.”

*MC: Where does coastal management need to focus in the years ahead?*

DK: “As the Ocean Commission [see story page 6] recently confirmed, we need to move toward regional governance and ecosystem-based management. To date we’ve created a lot of programs and regulations around single activities and species, as if constructing a house brick-by-brick without a blueprint. Now we have the difficult task of trying to consolidate those programs and recognize the interconnections.

*MC: What trends are having the greatest impact on coastal management in Maine?*

DK: “The increasing pace and pressure of development—with construction occurring on more marginal lands and coastal properties experiencing high-end redevelopment. What first galvanized coastal management in Maine was the threat of several big industrial projects. Now we’re facing countless small activities, the cumulative impact of which is huge, more difficult for people to see, and much harder to address.”

*MC: How well is coastal policy keeping pace with these cumulative changes?*

DK: “Not well: we have tools, but they’re not as sharp as they might be. The State Planning Office has documented the problems, and the Legislature has made some modest improvements, but projects are still being approved—one-by-one in local communities—that are degrading the landscape. Roughly 85 percent of land-use decisions are made at the local level, so we need to ask ‘how well are towns equipped to make these decisions?’ We have a strong desire for local control in Maine, but we don’t always understand the limitations. We expect a lot from volunteer committees that have little

We also need to do a better job of integrating science and management. The Gulf of Maine Council has focused in recent years on ‘science translation,’ relying on workshops and web-based tools to make scientific information more useful and accessible for managers. Now we’re bringing together scientists and managers to discuss research priorities so that managers’ most pressing questions get addressed. The ultimate goal is to have science help shape better choices at every level of management.”

*MC: Given the many challenges of this work, what personally motivates you to continue?*

DK: “I enjoy it! It’s fun and interesting, and some of the rewards are so tangible. For example, I fought hard for years to create the Wells Reserve despite strong federal resistance. To go there now and see busloads of students learning, scientists at work, and people out walking the trails is very satisfying. And NOAA now considers Wells one of the country’s best reserves! One could get discouraged in this work (not unlike listening to the news these days!), but I try to stay focused on things I have some control over—and make constructive choices at that level.”

### Gulf of Maine Resources



The Gulf of Maine Council’s web site, [www.gulfofmaine.org](http://www.gulfofmaine.org), has a wealth of reports and studies, including the Council’s 2001-2006 Action Plan. There are searchable databases for people working on Gulf-related issues, non-governmental organizations in the region, and research/information pertaining to the Gulf. Copies of the quarterly *Gulf of Maine Times* are archived on the site, and visitors can sign up on-line for a free subscription.

**Tides of Change Across the Gulf: An Environmental Report on the Gulf of Maine and Bay of Fundy.** This report, prepared for the October 2004 Gulf Summit, summarizes some key issues facing the Gulf—particularly land use, contaminants and pathogens, and fisheries and aquaculture. The Tides of Change report and many other Summit documents are on-line at <http://www.gulfofmainesummit.org/docs/index.html>.

# Scientists Warn about the Increased Threat of Invasive Species

Scientists, policy-makers and citizens are increasingly concerned about how invasive non-native species are affecting Maine's coastal ecosystems. The Maine Coastal Program supported a forum last May, sponsored by the Casco Bay Estuary Project and Maine Sea Grant, at which researchers confirmed the presence of more than two dozen introduced species following surveys done in three Southern Maine ports.

Invasive species enter coastal ecosystems through a variety of means, including accidental or intentional release of marine ornamentals (aquaria pets and plants), fishing and aquaculture operations, restoration projects, intentional introductions for food or pest management, and releases from research and educational facilities. The single largest source worldwide is shipping, which spreads organisms primarily through ballast water discharge and hull-fouling. Since most ships in Maine take on ballast water, rather than releasing it, most marine invasives along this coast are likely due to other sources.

Forum participants advocated for more vigilant monitoring, public education and preventive action, recommendations in line with the State's Action Plan for Managing Invasive Aquatic Species. A Maine Marine Invasive Committee, with representatives from government, academia and nonprofit organizations, is developing an identification guide and fact sheet to help people identify invasives and define the extent of the problem. Representatives of this committee also participate in a regional collaboration, the Northeast Aquatic Nuisance Species Panel (<http://www.northeastans.org>).

For details on the forum, visit [www.cascobay.usm.maine.edu/invasforum.html](http://www.cascobay.usm.maine.edu/invasforum.html) or contact Todd Janeski ([Todd.Janeski@maine.gov](mailto:Todd.Janeski@maine.gov), 287-1482). More invasives information can be found on-line at [http://www.pewoceans.org/reports/introduced\\_species.pdf](http://www.pewoceans.org/reports/introduced_species.pdf).

## Habitat Management on a Regional Scale

As the last issue of *Maine Coastline* documented, the spread of development into rural regions is a growing concern—given the importance these lands hold for water quality, wildlife, farming and forestry. Recognizing the value of rural resources, twelve towns in the “Sagadahoc Region” around Merrymeeting Bay have begun working to protect the natural features that cross their municipal boundaries.

“Without regional collaboration, the rural resources of this fast-growing area would be dealt with in piecemeal fashion, resulting in a fragmented and diminished landscape,” observes Elizabeth Hertz, a Senior Planner at the Maine Coastal Program who is helping to

coordinate the project. Using maps developed by the State's “Beginning with Habitat” program (<http://www.beginningwithhabitat.org/>), participating towns have begun to inventory and analyze their rural resources. Over

time, the communities may enter into inter-municipal agreements to improve resource management. Other possible measures—such as strengthened shoreland zoning—will be informed by what the inventories reveal. “Rural lands represent a complex tapestry of natural values,” Hertz notes, “and this kind of coordinated planning is essential to keeping that fabric intact.” For more information on the Sagadahoc Region Rural Resource Inventory, e-mail [Elizabeth.Hertz@maine.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.Hertz@maine.gov) or call 287-8935.



Maine Coastal Program  
State Planning Office  
38 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0038  
[www.maineoceanprogram.org](http://www.maineoceanprogram.org)

The Maine Coastal Program represents a partnership of local, regional and state agencies that work collaboratively to enhance management of the state's diverse coastal resources. Housed at the State Planning Office, Coastal Program staff work extensively with governmental agencies and community organizations such as local land trusts and regional economic development groups. Planning and outreach focus on such issues as watershed management, development issues, fisheries management, water quality monitoring, marine education, citizen stewardship, coastal hazards, marine infrastructure and habitat protection.

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